

# **North Iceland Culinary Experience: Innovate, Develop, Taste!**

**15 – 22 October 2015**



## **NICE - North Iceland Cuisine Using Social Media with a Local Food Focus**

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<b>Tony Meredith</b> Absolute Butchers	A meat entrepreneur with thirty five years experience in retail and wholesale of locally produced meat, poultry and other products. Tony has now set up a training facility and is passing this knowledge through training, consultancy and most importantly a butchery modern apprenticeship project for butchers which takes a 'field to plate' approach. Absolute butchery also offers training to both enthusiastic amateurs and professionals.
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## Introduction

Travel and Tourism's impact on the economic and social development of a country can be enormous; opening it up for business, trade and capital investment, creating jobs and entrepreneurialism for the workforce and protecting heritage and culture. The World Travel and Tourism Council (2015) report the impact of tourism on the Icelandic economy, highlighting,

- Total contribution of Travel and Tourism to GDP was 23.3% of total GDP in 2014.
- In 2014 Travel and Tourism supported (direct and indirect employment) 42 000 jobs being 23.7% of total employment.
- Visitors accounted for 20.5 % of all exports.

As tourism is an open industry it is subject to political, social, environmental and technological changes and trends to which it must respond. In the case of Iceland, the fallout from the financial crisis in 2008 and 2010 eruption of Eyjafjallajökull are poignant reminders of some of the recent challenges facing the tourism sector.

In their 2012 research, PKF comments that:

*"With regard to food, the main issue was around promoting the quality and variety available throughout Iceland. Again, the cost of food was of concern to some interviewees"* (PKF, 2013, p. 14).

The Icelandic Tourist Board carried out a survey with 2,359 visitors during summer 2011 and with 2,181 visitors during the 2011/12 winter season. In summary, the results of the summer survey suggested that the main purpose of visit recorded was vacation/holidays at 86.3% followed by meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) at 13.3% and visiting friends and relatives at 6.2%. The winter pattern was similar apart from a slight increase in the number of MICE visitors at 16.5% and business visitors at 4.5% (PKF, 2013).

There was a high number of returning visitors both during the summer and winter. In summer 79.6% of those interviewed came on an individually arranged trip compared with 67.8% during the winter. During the summer 10.2% were part of a package tour whereas in winter the figure was slightly higher at 17.6%. The remaining 10.2% (summer) and 14.6% (winter). According to (Horng & Tsai, 2012) culinary tourism and food tourism represent an emerging tourism market for many countries and creates a unique competitive edge for tourist destinations and related enterprises.

As in other Nordic countries, Icelanders are early adopters of emerging technologies. According to statistics almost 98% of Icelanders use the Internet (Businessculture.org, 2015). The Icelandic government's social media campaign in 2011 is an example of Iceland's awareness of social media issues. The campaign called 'Inspired by Iceland' (see <http://www.inspiredbyiceland.com/>) sought to promote tourism to Iceland and encouraged Icelanders to welcome travellers to their country. This initiative contributed to an increase of almost 20% in inward tourism. A different campaign that contributed to this increase called 'Iceland wants to be your friend' (see <http://www.icelandwantstobeyourfriend.com/>) sought to boost Iceland's reputation around the world.

Social media has not only been used to boost tourism but also to rework Iceland's constitution and gather feedback from Icelanders. A new proposal of the new constitution was posted on the internet by the Icelandic government and Icelanders were asked to give feedback and comments about it (Businessculture.org, 2015). Iceland has, in less than five years, established and embedded the use of social media into a range of business and political arenas. The potential for businesses that contribute to the tourism economy to take advantage of the power of social media to not only share their own business stories but the story of Iceland as a whole is very clear to see.

The focus of this case study report is to explore to what extent a range of hospitality and tourism businesses in the north of Iceland engage with social media as part of their marketing strategy and to its impact upon the business. The case study is structured as follows,

- Defining social media

- Use of social media across a range of hospitality and tourism organisations
- Summary of findings

In terms of data collection, a number of site visits were undertaken to observe best practice. There was the opportunity to interview and question representatives from each of the organisations where the primary data collection was undertaken. To explore how social media has been engaged with a series of broad question areas was established to elicit a consistency of responses from each of the case study establishments. The broad questions were,

1. Do you use any form of social media?
  - a. If yes, which, why those, what content is shared, etc
  - b. If no, why, are there any barriers – resources, connectivity, etc
2. How has the use of social media impacted upon your business?
3. How do you see social media featuring in your business in the future?
4. Do you feel there is a training / development need for the use of social media?

The study is made up of reviews at the following businesses / tourism destinations

- Skuggi Hotel, Reykjavik
- Kaffi Ku, Akureyri
- North Iceland Tourist Board
- Saga Travel
- The Lamb Inn, Akureyri
- Akureyri Food Festival
- Dried Fish production (Heilsa?)
- Skjaldarvik Guest House
- Hot Springs Geysirs and Natural Bath, near Myvatn
- Vogafjos Guest House
- Gamli Baukur restaurant, Husavik
- Ekta Fiskur Production
- Kaldi Microbrewery
- Hofstaddir Guest House
- Hotel Varmahlid
- Sutarrinn Tannery Centre - Atlantic Leather
- Holar University College
- Siglo Hotel, Siglofjordjur



## Defining social media



With the evolution of smartphones and social media, accessibility to information is easier than it ever has been. Customers are frequently asked to 'like' companies on Facebook, to 'follow' companies on Twitter, or 'rate' their experience on TripAdvisor. As a result, customers are becoming better connected to companies, more knowledgeable about products and services, and have gained power in buyer-seller relationship. Avlonitis & Panagopoulos (2010) suggest that as the use of social media in customer interactions has become common place, it is a logical progression for businesses to develop a social media presence.




There is no consensus on the definition of social media, one of the reasons being its relative newness and dynamic state. Solis (2010) defined social media as any tool that would use the Internet to facilitate conversations. Asserting that social media involved the shift from the traditional one-to-many marketing communications environment, to a many-to-many model. In the hospitality and tourism context, social media entails a change from one-to-one recommendations based upon experiences from individuals to an instantaneous and dynamic conversation involving many-to-many individuals expressing their views on their experiences. According to Zeng and Gerritsen (2014, p. 28), "social media includes social networking sites, consumer review sites, content community sites, wikis, Internet forums and location-based social media". Based upon this definition, social media includes sites like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, Instagram, TripAdvisor, blogs, locational media (such as FourSquare) and online travel agencies that feature user generated content.

Traditionally, these personal reviews and recommendations often came from talking with a friend, relative or acquaintance face to face. Social media has now expanded those conversations, in terms of both content and potential reach, with TripAdvisor (2015) asserting that it has over 200 million posts and 29 million user-generated images. Many hospitality and tourism organisations / products / services have reviews on TripAdvisor, covering some 4.5 million businesses in 147,000 destinations. In addition to commercial websites, social media networking sites, such as Facebook, provide hospitality and tourism experiences to friends and to friends of friends. Social media has therefore given the consumer a powerful voice, one that can influence many other consumers.

Millennials (people born between the late 1970s and mid-1990s) will soon replace baby boomers as the dominant, generational market segment in business travel (Kotler, et al., 2014) with their spending estimated to account for over half of all travel spending by 2020 (Walsh, 2014). This is explained by Bowen and McCain (2015) that as millennials graduate from university and / or advance in their careers, their spending will increase over the next four decades. Bowen and McCain (2015) go on to highlight that millennials share their personal experiences with products and make decisions based upon other reviews through social media. Additionally, they also utilise pricing information on social media sites before making purchases (Nusair, et al., 2013). For example, they will use these sites to obtain information before reserving hotel rooms, making restaurant reservations or choosing to go on a cultural excursion. The growing importance of millennials as consumers of hospitality and tourism products combined with their ability to use and their attraction to social media, means that it will remain an important platform for the tourism industry for the foreseeable future.

## A summary of social media use in North Iceland

Business Name	<i>Skuggi Hotel Reykjavik</i>	Business Type	Hotel
<p>A contemporary hotel in Reykjavik city centre. With one hundred very stylish, comfortable and well thought out bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms. An open plan reception area flowing into the lounge, bar and dining areas. Managed by Keahotels.</p> <p>Social media is well established with a number of media profiles. Facebook and twitter are regularly used, as is TripAdvisor</p>			
 			
Website	<a href="http://www.keahotels.is/en/hotels/skuggi-hotel">http://www.keahotels.is/en/hotels/skuggi-hotel</a>		
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/skuggihotel/?ref=ts&amp;fref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/skuggihotel/?ref=ts&amp;fref=ts</a>		
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/Keahotels">https://twitter.com/Keahotels</a>		
Instagram			
Pinterest			
YouTube			
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189970-d8074389-Reviews-Skuggi_Hotel-Reykjavik_Capital_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189970-d8074389-Reviews-Skuggi_Hotel-Reykjavik_Capital_Region.html</a>		
Other	Also uses online booking agency		

Business Name	<i>Kaffi Ku Akureyri</i>	Business Type	Dairy cow farm & coffee shop
<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>A cosy family run farm café in the beautiful fjord of Eyjafjordur in the north of Iceland. <u>Kaffi Ku</u> “Café Cow”) serves tasty locally baked goods and a cup of tea or coffee and homemade soup from a balcony above a working cowshed. You can watch the cows through the glass from the restaurant and learn about Icelandic farming. There is also a TV monitor where you can see what is going on, e.g. milking of the cows, which is a 24/7 operation and is done by a milking robot.</p> <p><b>Social Media/Future Plans</b></p> <p>Kaffi Ku uses social media for café news and meat sales.</p> <p>Kaffi Ku has plans to expand and sell ice-cream and milk as well as the meat they sell at the moment. They have further plans to embrace social media as part of their expansion.</p>			
  			

Website	<a href="http://kaffiku.is/">http://kaffiku.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Kaffi-k%C3%BA-360022964042149/">https://www.facebook.com/Kaffi-k%C3%BA-360022964042149/</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189954-d3940276-Reviews-Kaffi_ku-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189954-d3940276-Reviews-Kaffi_ku-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html</a>

<b>Business Name</b>	<b><i>North Iceland Tourist Board</i></b>	<b>Business Type</b>	National Tourism Agency
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#### Overview

Small organisation which is described as the “Official Travel Guide to North Iceland”. The organisation not only has a web and promotes the area via web, publications, FAM trips for journalists and promotion via social media. North Iceland Tourist Board is also responsible for tourism development in the North. For example the organisation is involved in lobbying necessary organisations/airlines etc. regarding road infrastructure and the proposal of an international flight to the north airport Akureyri. Marketing and promotion is going well as North Iceland has been on the list of Lonely Planet’s top places to visit summer 2015




#### Social Media/Future Plans

- High use of social media (see below a full Get Social section on the website) Future development/potential new roles in the organisation would concentrate on this



Website	<a href="http://www.northiceland.is/en">http://www.northiceland.is/en</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NorthIceland">https://www.facebook.com/NorthIceland</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/northiceland">https://twitter.com/northiceland</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://instagram.com/northiceland/">https://instagram.com/northiceland/</a>
Pinterest	<a href="https://www.pinterest.com/northiceland/">https://www.pinterest.com/northiceland/</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/Northiceland?sub_confirmation=1">https://www.youtube.com/user/Northiceland?sub_confirmation=1</a>
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g4939766-North_Iceland-Vacations.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g4939766-North_Iceland-Vacations.html</a>



Business Name	<i>Saga Travel</i>	Business Type	Tour Operator
<p>Established in 2009, it prioritises employing qualified staff (in tourism and marketing). Their sales philosophy is to sell 'plan B'... the things that can be promised... culinary tours, church tours, farmers tours, etc. As such they work closely with local businesses but only promise what they know they can deliver. Plan A is the extras such as the Northern Lights (which they cannot guarantee will be visible). Need to 'sell' these tours to the international travel agents, not locally, so Saga are very aware of the need to manage social media for competitive advantage. Future plans include to develop a role within the organisation aligned to the marketing function but to specifically manage social media.</p>			
  			
Website	<a href="http://www.sagatravel.is/">http://www.sagatravel.is/</a>		
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/sagatravel">https://www.facebook.com/sagatravel</a>		
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/sagatravel_is">https://twitter.com/sagatravel_is</a>		
Instagram	<a href="https://instagram.com/sagatravel/">https://instagram.com/sagatravel/</a>		
Pinterest			
YouTube			
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g189954-d2226993-Reviews-Saga_Travel_Day_Tours-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g189954-d2226993-Reviews-Saga_Travel_Day_Tours-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html</a>		

Business Name	<i>The Lamb Inn Akureyri</i>	Business Type	Accommodation
<p>The Lamb Inn is a family run business with 20 guest rooms, a restaurant specializing in home reared lamb and conference facilities for up to 50 people. In addition it is a licensed tour operator and offers bespoke tours for specific groups ie. Bird watchers. The business started in 1996 but was leased out from 2004 to 2012, when the family took over again and son in law Karl became a 50% shareholder. Social media then came into the picture.</p> <p>Karl informed us that 20% of his bookings were from 'Bookings.com' and he restricted their quota due to the commission paid. 20% of guests were Icelanders. Next came Germans, with around 10% each from England, Canada and Spain.</p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The make-up of guests seems to reflect the lingual priorities and competency of their social media. They have a good following of Icelanders and good local repeat business. They should look at taking bookings on their website or at the very least make contact details more visible.</p>			



Website	<a href="http://lambinn.is/en">http://lambinn.is/en</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/lambinniceland">https://www.facebook.com/lambinniceland</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/LambInnIceland">https://twitter.com/LambInnIceland</a>
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189954-d3377520-Reviews-Lamb_Inn_Ongulsstadir-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html#REVIEWS">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189954-d3377520-Reviews-Lamb_Inn_Ongulsstadir-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html#REVIEWS</a>
Other	Also uses online booking agency

<b>Business Name</b>	<b><i>Akureyri Food Festival</i></b>	<b>Business Type</b>	Festival
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Background:

Bi-annual free food exhibition and competition to promote the North as Iceland largest food production area. Held in the towns sports centre. Organised by a committee who employed an event company for the first time this year.

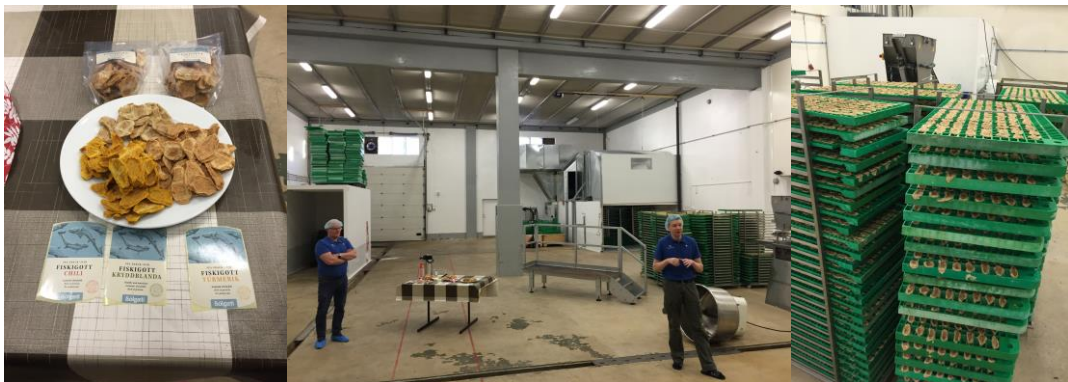
Comment:

It was difficult to find information on the fair before attending, and at the event there were no programme or printed materials available about the fair itself. Attendees appeared to be largely local and to know each other well which gave it a friendly and family feel. There was very little social media coming from the event organisers or partners and although listed on the North Iceland Tourist site and the Visit Akureyri site as an event it was not promoted via their Facebook or Twitter Pages. If the aim is to develop the event for tourists SM could be used to greater effect to advertise what is happening and provide information about the stand holders attending and surrounding activities. As a non-Icelandic speaking visitors it was difficult to gain any in depth knowledge about the event.



Website	<a href="http://www.nordurland.is/localfoodfestival">http://www.nordurland.is/localfoodfestival</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/events/539421306206979/">https://www.facebook.com/events/539421306206979/</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	

YouTube	
TripAdvisor	
Other	Online photo gallery and DVD retail

Business Name	<i>Articus Seafood Products</i>	Business Type	Dried fish production
<p><u>Background</u>  Brand Name Bitafiscur – cod jerky  A new business (launched 6 months ago) after a two year development programme. Producing dried fish chips sold mainly as a health product snack being rich in Omega 3 and high in protein.</p> <p><u>Comment</u>  This is a product for niche home market and will have limited appeal to those outside Iceland and the Scandinavian countries that are familiar with dried fish products. Their website is only in Icelandic and it needs a google translation. Website is very basic and Facebook seems to be their main method of communicating with their customers. Facebook page set up in 2013 but only really active since August 2015. They do not appear to use twitter or any other social media channels.</p>			
			
Website	<a href="https://articus.is">https://articus.is</a>		
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/arcticusseaproducts">https://www.facebook.com/arcticusseaproducts</a>		
Twitter			
Instagram			
Pinterest			
YouTube			
TripAdvisor			

Business Name	<i>Skjaldarvik Guest House</i>	Business Type	Guest house and restaurant
<p>Skjaldarvik is a family run, 28 room guest house with shared bathrooms in the rural Akureyri area, beautifully located with a hot tub and views over the water. The owners strive to change “treasure to trash” and use as much as possible in terms of recycling materials, they make and grow a lot of their own food and they are very design focused and innovative in their approach to furnishing and decorating the property, Mum Disa being a graphic designer. The guest house offers horse riding trips, trips to see the Northern Lights and lots of outdoor activities. It also provides hospitality training to people in the industry and works with volunteers. In the “About Us” section of their website, when the owners talk about running their business they say, “We put our hearts and souls into it.” This is successfully captured in the tone and the visuals that they use to market their business, both on the website and on their social media channels.</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> This business gets across the feel, emotions and experience of staying there with charm, humour and great visuals and customer reviews –they offer plenty of opportunities onsite and online for guests to engage and share their experiences via social media and there is a personality in their content which could</p>			

really be amplified by making a few tweaks and perhaps by using video, (just short clips) and this could work for their hospitality training too. Thinking of pre and post guest stays, they should converse more with guests via social channels, ask questions, encourage guests to share their “Skjaldarvik moments”– signpost opportunities to share and calls to action offline & online – to convert potential guests, encourage ambassadors and more great reviews.



Website	<a href="http://www.skjaldarvik.is/en/">http://www.skjaldarvik.is/en/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/skjaldarvik">https://www.facebook.com/skjaldarvik</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	<a href="https://instagram.com/skjaldarvikguesthouse">https://instagram.com/skjaldarvikguesthouse</a>
Pinterest	<a href="https://www.pinterest.com/disaskjaldarvik/www-skjaldarvik-is/">https://www.pinterest.com/disaskjaldarvik/www-skjaldarvik-is/</a>
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189954-d2083173-Reviews-Skjaldarvik_Guest_House-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189954-d2083173-Reviews-Skjaldarvik_Guest_House-Akureyri_Northeast_Region.html</a>
Other	Also uses online booking agency

Business Name	<i>Hot Springs Geysirs near Myvatn</i>	Business Type	Hot Springs/Geysers
<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>Located in the heart of north-east Iceland about 105 kilometres (65 miles) south of the Arctic Circle, Lake Mývatn with its unique nature and rich birdlife is one of Europe’s greatest natural treasures. The water supplies for the lagoon run straight from the National Power Company’s bore hole in Bjarnarflag. The water has a temperature of about 130°C when it arrives to the huge basin beside the lagoon itself forming an impressive, man-made hot spring. Altogether, the lagoon and the basin contain around 3.5 million litres of water with a temperature of 36 – 40°C.</p> <p>The lagoon itself is a man-made construction, its bottom is covered by sand and gravel. The characteristics of the water are unique in many ways. It contains a large amount of minerals, is alkaline and well suited for bathing. Due to its chemical composition, undesired bacteria and vegetation do not thrive in the lagoon making chloride or any other disinfectant redundant. Geothermal water in Iceland usually contains some sulphur. In this area the strength of the chemical is greater than others. Therefore it should be avoided to take jewellery from brass or silver into the water, they become black and can be damaged. Sulphur, however, is considered to have a positive effect on asthma and other respiratory diseases, and many of the trace elements in the water are considered to have a good effect on the development of skin problems. Hot tub and steam rooms are also offered.</p> <p>On the menu they have soup of the day, freshly baked bread, extensive and fresh salad bar, freshly baked rolls with vegetables or ham &amp; cheese, the famous HOT SPRING bread with smoked char from the lake. Throughout the day we offer hot beverages, cakes and cookies as well as sodas, beer and wine. The restaurant on site Kivka offers local specialities in a self-service area.</p>			



### Comment

Myvatn Nature Baths are using Social Media regularly with an emphasis on Facebook, with regular updates. However Twitter is less active and they could certainly make more of this and encourage re-tweets from followers.

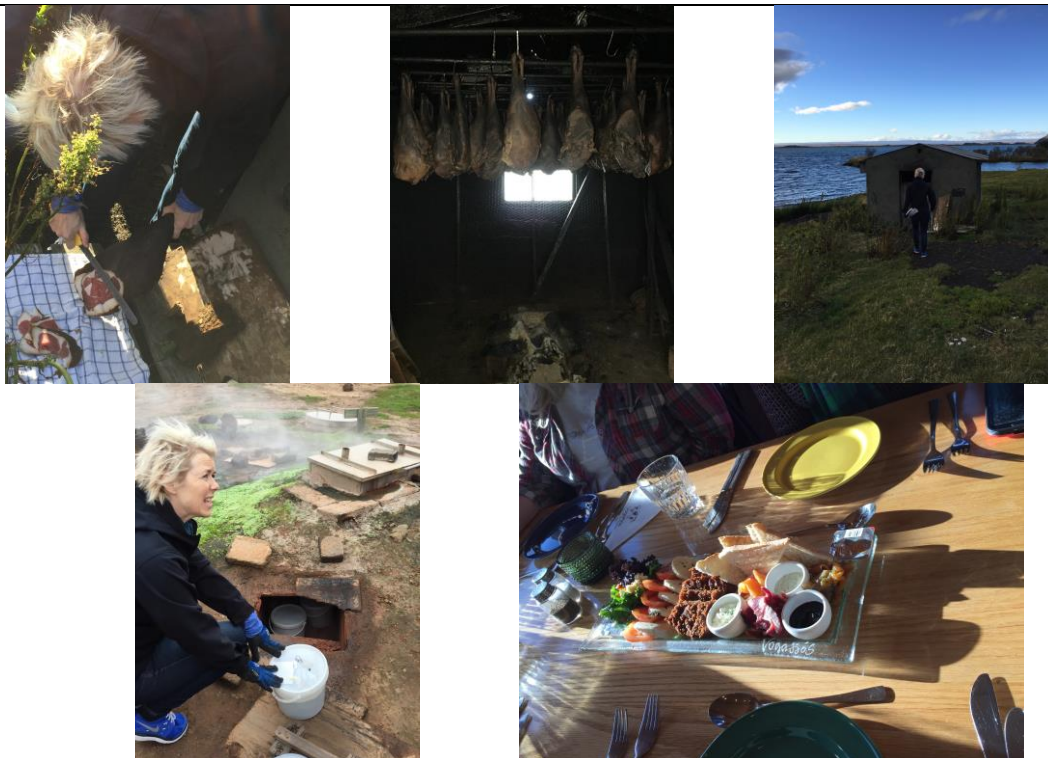
Given the beautiful nature of the Nature Baths and scenic area, Instagram could be an excellent channel for them. Their website is very good, informative with links to other relevant sites including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They do not have a link to Pinterest however there are many photographs from other 'pinner' of the nature baths and they should take some control by posting their own pictures and have a link to this from their website.





Website	<a href="http://www.myvatnnaturebaths.is/">http://www.myvatnnaturebaths.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/myvatnnaturebaths">https://www.facebook.com/myvatnnaturebaths</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/myvnaturebaths">https://twitter.com/myvnaturebaths</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://instagram.com/myvatnnaturebaths">https://instagram.com/myvatnnaturebaths</a>
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g315845-d3388837-Reviews-Hverarondor_Hverir-Myvatn_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g315845-d3388837-Reviews-Hverarondor_Hverir-Myvatn_Northeast_Region.html</a>

Business Name	<i>Vogafjos Guest House</i>	Business Type	Guest house and restaurant
<p><b>Background:</b> This is a family run restaurant and shop located in the middle of a family farm in a beautiful location on the edge of Lake Myvatn. The cowshed is part of the restaurant building and can be seen via a viewing panel in the shop. The owner, Olof, is passionate about what she does and is using, and passing on, skills from previous generations. Their USP is that all the food is prepared and grown on the farm, including geyser bread baked in communal steam oven located nearby. They also have a small guesthouse.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> This is a wonderful location and set up that ticks all the boxes for a great experience for tourists. Trip Advisors is their key SM tool and they also use FB. They are at capacity during the summer months so have no need to promote themselves then, but would like more business over the summer and could grow their SM to achieve this. They have separate FB and Trip Advisor pages for the café and the Guest house. There is not much activity on the FB pages, but they do translate their postings into English which is a very good idea. TA pages are busy with customer reviews (very good) but no replies or comments added so they could use TA more to their advantage.</p>			





Website	<a href="http://www.vogafjos.is/">http://www.vogafjos.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Vogafj%C3%B3s-Caf%C3%A9-304792782883379/">https://www.facebook.com/Vogafj%C3%B3s-Caf%C3%A9-304792782883379/</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g315845-d1420404-Reviews-Vogafjos_Guesthouse-Myvatn_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g315845-d1420404-Reviews-Vogafjos_Guesthouse-Myvatn_Northeast_Region.html</a>

Business Name	<i><b>Gamli Baukur restaurant Husavik</b></i>	Business Type	Restaurant
<p>The restaurant is located on the harbourside in Húsavík, constructed of driftwood. It offers fresh local seafood and other local and international dishes, as well as various beverages. Managed by one of the whale watching companies, this restaurant benefits by operating in conjunction with the whale watching boats / tours. The restaurant does have a lot of social media channels, but does not utilise them in a strategic way at all... 'they are so busy every day that there is no need to!'.</p>			
			

Website	<a href="http://www.gamlibaukur.is/home/">http://www.gamlibaukur.is/home/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/whalewatchingiceland">https://www.facebook.com/whalewatchingiceland</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/northsailing">https://twitter.com/northsailing</a>
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/northsailing">https://www.youtube.com/user/northsailing</a>
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189963-d1099092-Reviews-Gamli_Baukur-Husavik_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g189963-d1099092-Reviews-Gamli_Baukur-Husavik_Northeast_Region.html</a>
Other	Also uses Flickr

<b>Business Name</b>	<b><i>Ekta Fiskur Production</i></b>	<b>Business Type</b>	Salt cod fish production
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Background:

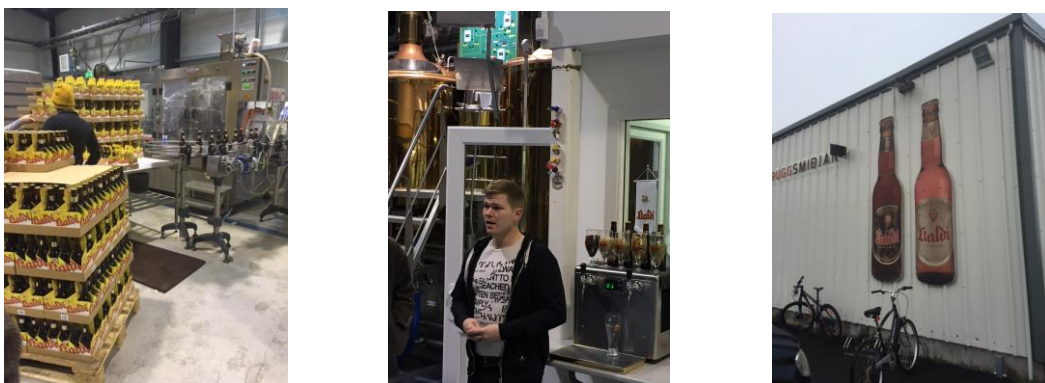
A 5<sup>th</sup> generation Bacalhau producer. Their production facilities include a reception room with wall full of photographs showing the history of the company and the family. There is also a small café and shop which is being expanded into a larger premises. The company exports dried and smoked fish throughout Iceland and overseas.

Comment:

The company welcomes any visitors and has developed a visitor tour, guided by the current owner who is a seasoned performer. They are active on FB though do not have a Trip Advisor listing which is surprising. They work with local tour operators to bring visitors by appointment. When the larger café is complete it would be advantageous to get listed on TA as this appears to be the main guiding tool in the area. Their web site is not aimed at Tourist so may benefit from a separate site for the café which is more user friendly.



Website	<a href="http://www.ektafiskur.is/">http://www.ektafiskur.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ektafiskur">https://www.facebook.com/ektafiskur</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	
Other	Recipe blog

Business Name	<i>Kaldi Microbrewery</i>	Business Type	Brewery
<p>Bruggsmidjan ehf is a family run microbrewery which was established in 2005. It produces 5 different Icelandic 'Kaldi' beers (4 standard products, one monthly special), brewed by a Czech recipe and using high quality raw materials. The beer has no added sugar or any preservatives, and it is not pasteurized. The aim is to make Kaldi fresh and pure. The company has experienced significant growth since starting out, they have expanded premises twice, all the family are involved, and the son and daughter-in-law are now working on the development of a beer spa next to where the brewery is. At present the company produces 300k litres a year and sells/distributes only within Iceland.</p> <p><b>Summary:</b> At present the business is not engaging with customers, B2B or visitors via social media, however they are aware of this. Training in to how to use SM channels, how to find customers and as to the benefits of engaging via social media would be very helpful, as would similar industry examples from elsewhere and case studies to let the business see how others are using social media in their industry sector. Time and resource are clearly also a consideration.</p>			
			
Website	<a href="http://www.bruggsmidjan.is/default/page/about_bruggsmidjan">http://www.bruggsmidjan.is/default/page/about_bruggsmidjan</a>		
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Bruggsmi%C3%B0jan-Kaldi-289222151143069/?ref=page_internal">https://www.facebook.com/Bruggsmi%C3%B0jan-Kaldi-289222151143069/?ref=page_internal</a>		
Twitter			
Instagram			
Pinterest			
YouTube			
TripAdvisor			

Business Name	<i>Hofstaddir Guest House</i>	Business Type	Guest house and restaurant
<p>Sustainable guest house which takes independent bookings as well as guided tours of Iceland. Locally produced served in excellent restaurant sourced from the vicinity. Local products for sale in reception including jam, birch syrup etc. At Guesthouse Hofstaðir they offer 14 rooms with private facilities (bathroom with shower), wooden floor, blackout drapes, hair dryer, tea/coffee facilities, free Wi-Fi in the rooms, Satellite TV and a porch of your own with two chairs and a table. The Restaurant has at its heart Toti's gourmet Arctic cuisine. This comprises the creative ideas of Tóti, the chef de cuisine and owner as well as recipes and the people living in the Arctic who have used local ingredients and homemade products and their own wherewithal down through the centuries.</p> <p>The main focus is always on providing a unique experience that combines great food, wild nature and a great atmosphere. The restaurant highlights on homemade Icelandic food and focuses on local products with the best ingredient that we can get from each season: Beef, lamb, horsemeat, arctic char, cod, shrimps, potatoes, vegetables and spices. Potatoes, salads and herbs are cultivated on the farm.</p>			



### Comment

An excellent guest house – open from April – end of October and has a good presence on Tripadvisor with links to various booking sites. They would benefit from Facebook and Twitter at least and given the stunning location of this guest house, Instagram and Pinterest would inspire potential guests to visit who are unfamiliar with the beauty of the area.

They had a Trip Advisor sticker on the door and clearly rely on this for bookings which come independently rather than through a tour operator.



Website	<a href="http://www.hofsstadir.is/index.php/en/">http://www.hofsstadir.is/index.php/en/</a>
Facebook	
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g608883-d2186532-Reviews-Hofsstadir_Guesthouse-Saudarkrokur_Northwest_Region.html#REVIEWS">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g608883-d2186532-Reviews-Hofsstadir_Guesthouse-Saudarkrokur_Northwest_Region.html#REVIEWS</a>
Other	Also uses online booking agency


Business Name	<i>Hotel Varmahlid</i>	Business Type	Hotel and restaurant
A three-star hotel with 19 bedrooms, lounge and restaurant and also used for celebrations, meetings and small conferences. The hotel is located on the highland road over Kjölur, whether before starting the journey from North Iceland or after crossing the highlands from the south. A range of social; media tools are in use here.			
<b>Summary:</b> Again, this is about strategy and objectives for using channels of choice and measurement, as well as training – all would help this business improve customer engagement and could help justify the time and resource they choose to invest in using social media, as would case studies of similar businesses either in Iceland or further afield to help provide relevant examples.			



Website	<a href="http://www.hotelvarmahlid.is/">http://www.hotelvarmahlid.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/HotelVarmahlid">https://www.facebook.com/HotelVarmahlid</a>
Twitter	
Instagram	
Pinterest	<a href="https://www.pinterest.com/hotelvarmahlid/">https://www.pinterest.com/hotelvarmahlid/</a>
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g660250-d531408-Reviews-Hotel_Varmahlid-Varmahlid_Northwest_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g660250-d531408-Reviews-Hotel_Varmahlid-Varmahlid_Northwest_Region.html</a>
Other	Also uses online booking agency

Business Name	<b><i>Sutarrinn Tannery Centre - Atlantic Leather</i></b>	Business Type	Tannery and shop
<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p><b>The Tannery Visitor Centre</b> is located in Sauðárkrókur, north Iceland, in the only tannery in Europe which makes fish leather. The Visitor Centre provides visitors with an unusual way to experience the tannery and its products: guided tours of the actual tannery, where fish-skin is expertly processed to make high-quality leather. Visitors can learn about the history of tanning and see traditional tools and articles. The Tannery offers 2 tours per day and the visitor centre has been open for 5 years. 2015 achieved 16,000 visitors.</p> <p><b>Fashion</b></p> <p>Atlantic Leather and its subsidiary, Lodskinn, are both located in the tannery in Sauðárkrókur, each specialising in its own field. <u>Atlantic Leather</u> makes fish leather from four fish species, while <u>Lodskinn's</u> main production is decorative longhair lambskins. The fish skins have been voted as no 1 in the world. Fashion houses around the world use the Atlantic Leather fish skins in their designs, brands such as Prada, Dior and Nike.</p> <p>Leathers and hides can be purchased here, direct from the tannery, along with first-hand information about the products.</p> <p><b>Social Media/Future Plans</b></p> <p>The Tannery is on FB. There are FB channels one side for the factory and one for the visitor centre. Future plans will be to develop a social media strategy</p>			



 	
 	
Website	<a href="http://www.sutarinn.is/">http://www.sutarinn.is/</a> <a href="http://www.atlanticleather.is/index.php/en/#!huld_design_7">http://www.atlanticleather.is/index.php/en/#!huld_design_7</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Gestastofa-S%C3%BAtarans-127156067299169/">https://www.facebook.com/Gestastofa-S%C3%BAtarans-127156067299169/</a> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Atlanticleathericeland">https://www.facebook.com/Atlanticleathericeland</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/AtlanticLeather">https://twitter.com/AtlanticLeather</a>
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	

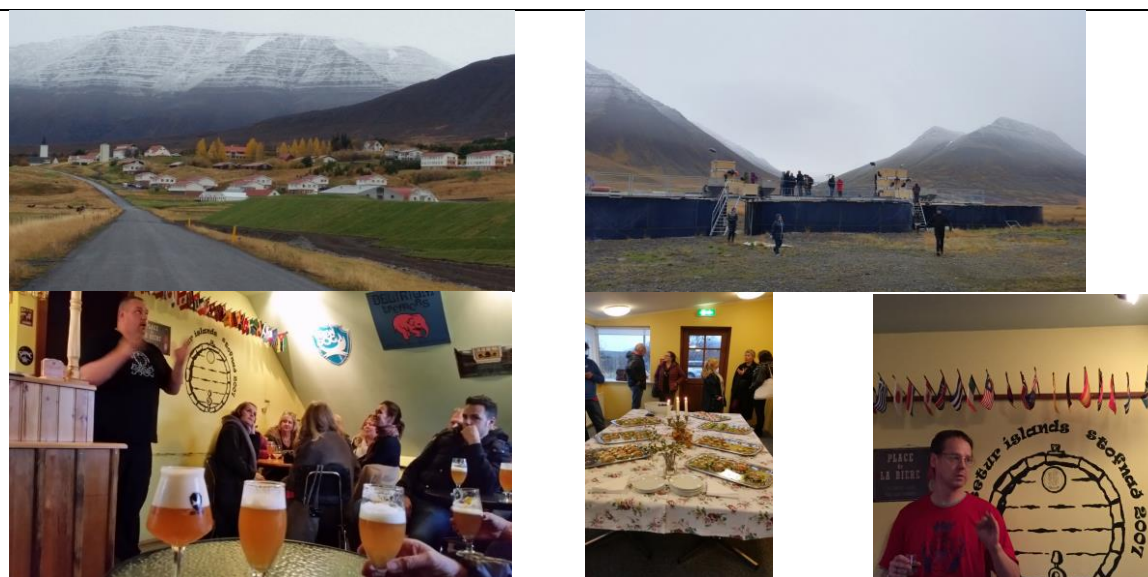
Business Name	<i>Holar University College</i>	Business Type	Education, agri-tourism
<b>Overview</b> <p><u>Hólar Town</u> a small village in the Hjaltadalur valley</p> <p>Hólar University College is a specialized university institution providing education both at undergraduate and postgraduate level in equine science, aquaculture and fish biology, and tourism studies. All departments have active research programmes in their fields.</p> <p>Example of Research -</p> <p><b>PURE, FRESH AND SIMPLE. NEW NORDIC CUISINE IN ICELAND</b></p> <p><b>Year:</b> (2007-2009) 2012-2013</p> <p><b>Laufey Haraldsdóttir</b></p> <p><i>In recent years the image of the Nordic countries as worthwhile food tourism destinations has systematically been developed and promoted through the joint Nordic project New Nordic Cuisine (Larsen, 2010; Musgrave, 2011). The simplicity and pureness of the Nordic cuisine has been highlighted and closely related to nature imagery and spectacular scenery. The short light summers and long dark winters are an important background for the Nordic cuisine imagery and discourse.</i></p> <p><i>The platform for the study was representing Iceland in the steering group of the joint Nordic effort New Nordic Cuisine, in 2005-2009. The objectives of the steering group was to communicate what New Nordic Cuisine is about and invitation for practice creation in collaboration with The Nordic Innovation Center (NICE) (Byrkjeflot, H., Strandgaard Pedersen, J., Svejenova, S., 20013).</i></p> <p><i>The aim of the study is to shed light on the manifestation of the New Nordic Cuisine in Iceland. Data collection was made through a case study, participant observation, interview, reviewing of audio-visual material and media coverage related to the subject.</i></p>			

Holar Town hosts an annual craft beer festival. In 2014 Garún Icelandic Stout was the festival winner, this is a stout from Borg brugghús brewery. The Brewery hosted the NICE team to sample a number of different craft beers from all over Iceland.

### Social Media/ Future Plans

Limited use of social media at the moment. The University is aware that this is an urgent requirement primarily driven by students who actually set their own face book groups up. Also as 90% of students are enrolled as distance learning student's social media channels will be a great platform for them.

The beer festival



Website	<a href="http://holar.is/en/english">http://holar.is/en/english</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Holaskoli?ref=hl">https://www.facebook.com/Holaskoli?ref=hl</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/HolarUniversity">https://twitter.com/HolarUniversity</a>
Instagram	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	

Business Name	<i>Siglo Hotel Siglofordjur</i>	Business Type	Hotel
<p>Siglo Hotel is a luxurious stylish 68 room hotel situated in town which was once a large herring fishing port but now has a population of 1,300 people. It is one hours drive from Akureyri, Icelands second largest town and occupies a beautiful position overlooking a harbor that appears to have been renovated in tandem with the building of the hotel. It is privately owned and has only just opened.</p> <p><u>Summary.</u></p> <p>The hotel's potential for social media is huge. Considering the massive investment of money and strength of the offering, their social media is weak. Facebook is fine but the rest does not seem to be managed or stimulated.</p> <p>However, with the incredible reviews on Trip Advisor, one of which stated, 'after 50 years of traveling the world, this is the best hotel I have ever stayed in', they could employ someone to help spread the word. This seems another example of doing it well and leaving out the bits you are not willing to work at.</p>			



Website	<a href="http://www.siglohotel.is/">http://www.siglohotel.is/</a>
Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/siglohotel">https://www.facebook.com/siglohotel</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/siglohotel">https://twitter.com/siglohotel</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://instagram.com/siglohotel/">https://instagram.com/siglohotel/</a>
Pinterest	
YouTube	
TripAdvisor	<a href="http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189971-d7623376-Reviews-Siglo_Hotel-Siglufjordur_Northeast_Region.html">http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g189971-d7623376-Reviews-Siglo_Hotel-Siglufjordur_Northeast_Region.html</a>
Other	Also uses LinkedIn; Google Plus; and produce a newsletter

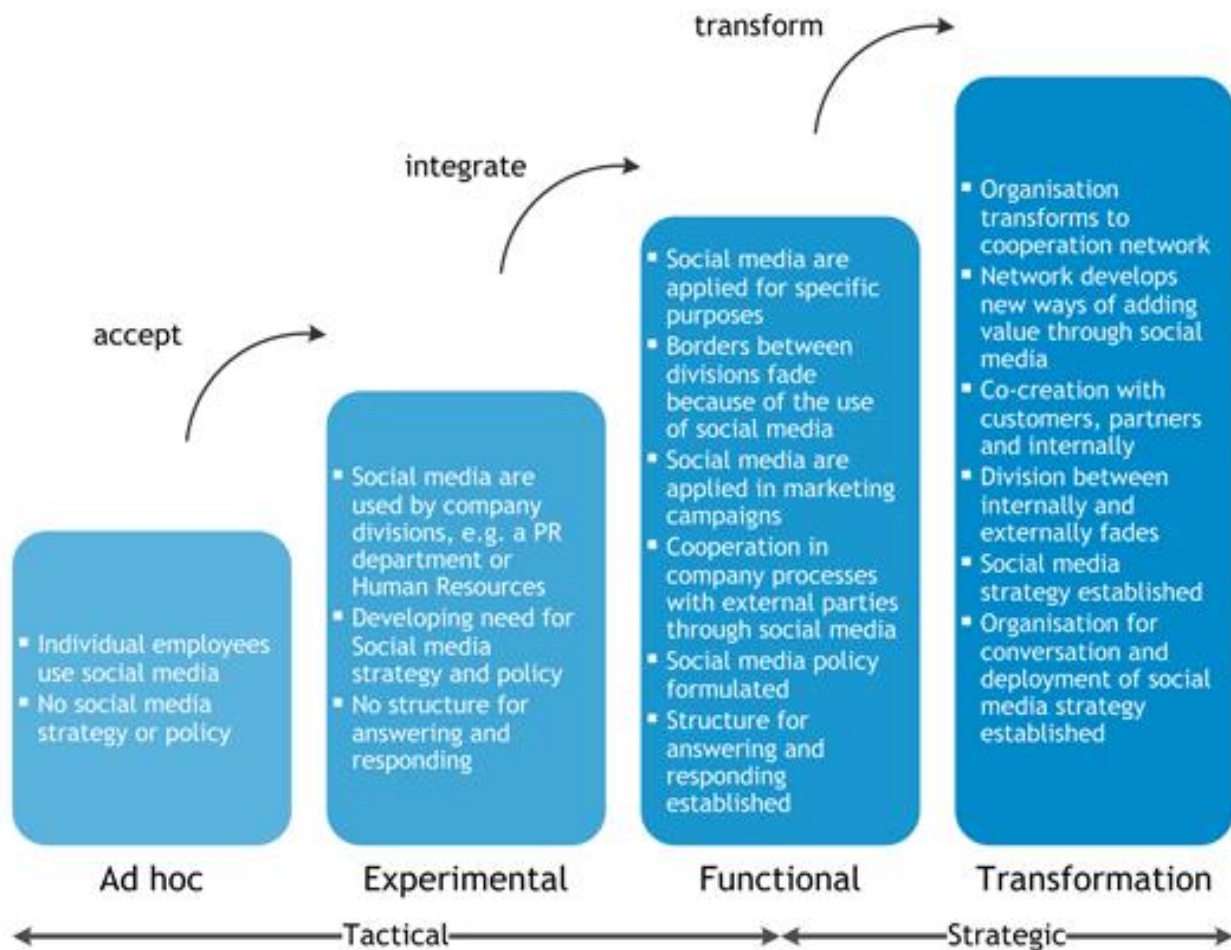
## Summary of findings

With the Government promoting the use of social media and funding a very effective infrastructure across the island to support the use of Web 2.0 technologies, it is very apparent that local businesses have embraced the use of social media. Some simply to have a presence on sites such as Facebook and Twitter, and do not engage in a strategic way to foster a competitive advantage. Others by contrast (but in the minority), do engage with social media in an active way with regular updates, prompt replies to customer enquiries, and generating a sense of community / personal experience by doing so.

One area of Web 2.0 technology that virtually all businesses have integrated to their business are media such as TripAdvisor and Online Travel Agencies such as [www.bookings.com](http://www.bookings.com). These were viewed as very effective marketing and sales tools by the business owners and they felt that a good proportion of business was generated as a result.

It was felt that in general, businesses in Northern Iceland have accepted the benefits of having a social media profile. The managers / owners and / or some of the staff employed will use social media in a personal capacity and have transferred that level of knowledge to the business. They promote the business in a basic way with a range of written and visual copy. Some of the businesses visited did utilise their social media in a more integrated manner with different media being linked together so as to benefit for exposure from multiple sources. It was felt that whilst there is an attempt to use social media to support marketing activities, this was not fully developed into a formal strategy so far.





For organisations to integrate social media fully into their strategic development plans, virtually all businesses visited would need support in a number of forms to allow social media to transform their businesses. Problems identified by most business owners was the time to manage social media, and as most were family businesses they simply didn't have the man-power. One possible solution to this is to develop a social media hub within the Regional Tourism Office that can coordinate a range of activities and have a very targeted approach to marketing of the region and the individual businesses themselves. This hub could then host a range 'events' in the region which could be monthly themed online discussions, supporting the festivals held in the area and promoting the individual businesses themselves. This would be similar to how the social media is being used to great effect for food festivals in the UK (including Cornwall, Sheffield and West Sussex) and the very popular monthly #scotlandhour conversations.

One cautionary note, there is a dilemma to be faced by businesses in Northern Iceland... currently it is a very much unspoilt region with beautiful scenery with numerous areas of conservation and natural interest. In addition, there is a sense of community and living of the land, all of which contributes to the very special experience that visitors will enjoy. If social media were to be utilised in a much more strategic and focused way, increased tourism will clearly benefit the local economy. The dilemma is that with this increased level of business, will the beauty and tranquillity of the region be spoilt and the special feeling of hospitality that currently exists will be lost.

## **Further research opportunities**

As a result of this visit to Northern Iceland and our visits to a range of hospitality and tourism businesses, the following further research opportunities have been suggested,

1. To investigate the opportunities to develop a social media hub for the Northern Iceland region focused on supporting the local hospitality and tourism businesses
2. To develop a series of social media training sessions that can share best practice in the use of social media
3. To investigate the impact of the national agenda for introducing social media to Iceland
4. To explore the impact of extensive and effective social media strategies on the environment and on community as a whole



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